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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Second periodic reports submitted by States parties under Articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum

MOROCCO */ **/

[27 August 1998]

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*/ The initial report submitted by the Government of Morocco concerning rights covered by articles 1 to 15 (E/1990/5/Add.13) was considered by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at its tenth session (see E/C.12/1994/SR. 8-10).

**/ The information submitted in accordance with the guidelines concerning the initial part of reports of States parties is contained in the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.23).

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CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
Introduction		1 - 3	4
PART ONE			
GENERAL			
I.	LAND AND PEOPLE	4 - 7	4
II.	GENERAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE	8 - 17	5
PART 2			
INFORMATION RELATING TO ARTICLES 1 TO 15 OF THE COVENANT			
ARTICLE 1	The right to self-determination	18 - 22	6
A.	Domestic dimension of the principle	18 - 19	6
B.	International dimension of the principle	20 - 22	6
ARTICLE 2	Economic, social and cultural rights	23 - 41	7
A.	Constitutional advances	25 - 28	7
B.	High priority for social development	29 - 33	8
C.	Promotion of social dialogue	34	9
D.	Enhancement of the consultative process	35 - 37	9
E.	Revitalization of associations	38 - 41	10
ARTICLE 3	Equal rights of men and women to enjoy economic, social and cultural rights	42 - 45	10
ARTICLE 4		46	11
ARTICLE 5		47	11
ARTICLE 6	The right to work	48 - 101	11
A.	The employment situation in Morocco	48 - 60	11
B.	Measures to promote full employment	61 - 84	14
C.	Legal measures	85	18
D.	Vocational training programme	86 - 87	19
E.	Reform of vocational training	88 - 97	20
F.	Equality between men and women as regards employment	98 - 101	23
ARTICLE 7	The right to just and favourable conditions of work	102 - 112	23
A.	The right to remuneration	103 - 104	23
B.	Safe and healthy working conditions	105	24

CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
ARTICLE 8	Trade union rights	106 - 112	24
ARTICLE 9	The right to social security	113 - 122	26
A.	Compulsory funds	114 - 119	26
B.	Optional funds	120 - 121	27
C.	Health cover	122	27
ARTICLE 10	Protection of the family, mothers and children	123 - 128	28
A.	Protection of the family	123	28
B.	Protection of children	124 - 125	28
C.	Protection of maternity	126 - 128	29
ARTICLE 11	The right to an adequate standard of living	129 - 143	30
A.	Right to adequate food	130 - 134	31
B.	Right to adequate housing	135 - 143	32
ARTICLE 12	The right to physical and mental health	144 - 148	33
A.	Moroccan health policy	144 - 145	33
B.	Maternal and child health	146 - 147	34
C.	Epidemic and communicable disease control programmes	148	35
ARTICLE 13	The right to education	149 - 191	35
A.	Moroccan education policy	149 - 152	35
B.	Developments in primary and secondary education	153 - 166	36
C.	Promotion of rural schools	167 - 169	39
D.	Higher education	170 - 185	40
E.	Right of choice of educational establishment	186	43
F.	Adult education and literacy	187 - 188	43
G.	Specific projects	189 - 191	44
ARTICLE 15	The right to take part in cultural life	192 - 207	45
A.	Moroccan cultural policy	192 - 198	45
B.	Conservation, development and diffusion of culture	199 - 206	46
C.	Encouragement and development of international cooperation and contacts	207	48
Conclusion		208 - 210	48

Introduction

1. In accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified by Morocco on 3 May 1979, the Government of Morocco submits below its second periodic report on implementation of the Covenant.

2. The Government of Morocco has noted with satisfaction the comments of the Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, which appreciated the "measures taken to reduce the effects of structural adjustment programmes on the most vulnerable sectors of society". It has also noted the positive conclusions expressed regarding the measures and policies adopted to promote the right to housing and to health, the reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates and the efforts made to protect children and reduce illiteracy.

3. Having also noted the principal subjects of concern raised and the Committee's comments on factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Covenant, the Government of Morocco, which attaches great importance to the suggestions and recommendations made, describes below the progress made and measures adopted with a view to fully exercising the rights identified in the Covenant, since the date of submission of its initial report.

PART ONE

GENERAL

I. LAND AND PEOPLE

4. Morocco lies in the north-west corner of the African continent between 21° N and 36° N. Its area is 710,850 km². It is bounded to the north by the mediterranean Sea and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean. Its land borders are limited to the east by Algeria and to the south by Mauritania.

5. The general census of population and housing carried out in 1994 put the population at 26,074,000 with an average density of 36.7 inhabitants per km². According to a projection by the Centre for Demographic Studies and Research, by 1 July 1995 the total had reached 26,386,000, the an average density being 37.1 inhabitants per km². In 1995, according to the national survey on population and employment, the working population stood at 10,006,436 or 37.9 % of the total population; 4,982,080 lived in urban areas and 5,024,356 in rural areas.

6. The 1994 population census shows that the Moroccans who live in rural areas are now more numerous than those living in urban areas: 48.6 per cent live in country areas and 51.4 per cent in towns.

7. The unemployment rate in 1995 stood at 16 per cent of the working population (22.9 per cent in urban areas and 8.5 per cent in rural areas). The 15-24 age group was worst affected, both in the country and in towns. Unemployment was higher among women in urban areas (32.2 per cent of the female working population unemployed, against 18.7 per cent of the male working population); conversely, it was higher among men in rural areas (6.5 per cent for women, 9.6 per cent for men).

II. GENERAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE

8. Morocco is a constitutional, democratic and social monarchy. The latest revision of the Constitution, approved by referendum, dates from 7 October 1996.

9. In accordance with the initial articles of the Constitution, sovereignty rests with the nation, which exercises it directly by referendum and indirectly through the constitutional institutions. Political parties, trade union organizations, local communities and occupational chambers work together to organize and represent the citizens.

10. The King is the supreme representative of the nation, the symbol of its unity, and guarantor of the permanence and continuity of the State. He ensures respect for Islam and the Constitution. He is protector of the rights and freedoms of citizens, social groups and communities.

11. Legislative power is exercised by the Parliament which, since the Constitutional revision of 1996, has been composed of two chambers: the Chamber of Representatives and the Chamber of Councillors. The members of the Chamber of Representatives are elected by direct universal suffrage. The Chamber of Councillors is three-fifths comprised of members elected in each region by an electoral college made up of local community representatives, and two-fifths comprised of members elected in each region by electoral colleges made up of elected representatives of professional federations and members elected at national level by an electoral college comprising employees' representatives.

12. The Government is composed of the Prime Minister and ministers. It is responsible to the King and to Parliament. It is responsible for enforcing the law and is in charge of the administration. The Prime Minister exercises regulatory power. He may delegate certain of his powers to ministers. He is responsible for coordinating ministerial activities.

13. The judiciary is independent of the legislature and the executive. Magistrates are appointed by dahir (King's decree), at the proposal of the executive committee of the magistrature. The composition of this committee is determined by the Constitution. Chaired by the King, it includes nine magistrates, and the Minister of Justice is its vice-president. Magistrates are subject to the magistrature's statute. The executive committee of the magistrature ensures that the responsibilities undertaken by magistrates have been exercised in matters concerning their promotion and discipline. Members of the bench are irremovable.

14. The local communities are the regions, prefectures, provinces and communes. Morocco is divided into regions. A law promulgated on 2 April 1997 makes provision for a new legal framework for the regions, which now function as local communities provided with councils that have powers of voting and control over the executive authority (the governor of the regional capital). The number, names, territorial limits and capitals of the regions will soon be determined by decree. The regions as a whole are in turn subdivided. Morocco has ten wilaya covering 13 provinces, twenty-four prefectures and thirty-one other provinces, which are themselves divided into rural and urban communes.

15. The local communities elect assemblies that are responsible for managing their affairs democratically under conditions determined by law. Communal councils are elected by relative majority in a single-round uninominal ballot, by direct universal suffrage for a six-year term.

16. Prefectorial and provincial assemblies are elected by members of communal assemblies under the proportional system in which votes are cast for several names on a list and any remaining seats are attributed to the parties which have the best showing. Only communal councillors are eligible. The professional bodies, chambers of commerce, industry and services, craft industries, agriculture and the fishing industry are also represented in these assemblies on the basis of one representative from each.

17. Regional councils are composed of elected representatives of local communities, occupational chambers and employees' organizations. They also include the Members of Parliament elected in the region and the Chairmen of the prefectorial and provincial assemblies located in the region, who attend meetings in an advisory capacity.

PART TWO

INFORMATION RELATING TO ARTICLES 1 TO 15 OF THE COVENANT

ARTICLE 1

The right to self-determination

A. Domestic dimension of the principle

18. The right of peoples to self-determination is a fundamental right which has always been held sacred and guaranteed throughout Morocco's political and constitutional history. In addition to the information supplied in its initial report (E/1990/5/Add.13), the government wishes to recall that the Moroccan Constitution revised in 1996 and those which preceded it (1962,1970,1972,1992) lay the foundations of the Moroccan political system in strict accordance with the sacred and inalienable right of peoples to self-determination. Thus, sovereignty rests with the nation, which exercises it directly by referendum and indirectly through the constitutional institutions (art.2), and the law is the supreme expression of the nation's will (art.4).

19. Likewise, the members of the Chamber of Representatives and the Chamber of Councillors derive their mandate from the nation (art. 36). The region, established as a local community since the 1992 Constitution, offers the people additional scope for debate, dialogue and training which will help ensure that democracy is even more firmly rooted at local level. This democratic gain at regional level will have a positive impact at national level, in that the regional system now forms a basis for national representation in the Chamber of Councillors established by the revised Constitution of 1996.

B. International dimension of the principle

20. Its compliance with the programmes approved by the United Nations Security Council in the Western Sahara affair illustrates, if there was any need,

Morocco's wholehearted commitment to the international legal instruments for establishing and protecting effectively the basic right of all peoples to self-determination. Concerned to preserve peace and security in the region, and despite Morocco's historical rights, its sovereign, while attending the 1981 OAU summit in Nairobi, proposed that a free referendum should be held under international supervision.

21. Morocco's determination to abide by the provisions of the settlement plan and the Houston Accords is not, however, shared by the other party, which continues to employ various tactics aimed at hampering the process intended to lead to the referendum. The government stands by the settlement plan and the Houston Accords, and is determined to ensure that the settlement process agreed under UN authority is scrupulously and fully applied, and that all our fellow-citizens in Western Sahara are guaranteed their legitimate right to take part in the referendum.

22. As a supporter of dialogue, consultation and the right of peoples to self-determination, Morocco is endeavouring to achieve complete territorial integrity in strict compliance with international law. Finally, it should be noted that Morocco has devoted a huge investment effort to the development of the Saharan provinces, and thereby to the promotion of the economic, social and cultural rights of their people. That effort is still being maintained, despite the financial difficulties created by the burden of external debt that weighs very heavily on our economy.

ARTICLE 2

Economic, social and cultural rights

23. In a message addressed to the first Mediterranean Meeting of the National Institutions for Promoting and Protecting Human Rights held in Marrakech on 27-29 April 1998, which was attended by Mrs. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, His Majesty the King emphasized that "the safeguarding of rights in all their various aspects is dependent on the guarantee of economic, social and cultural rights."

24. Morocco is firmly committed to promoting economic, social and cultural rights, as demonstrated by the recent constitutional advances and the government's determination to attach the highest priority to social development, the promotion of social dialogue, the enhancement of the consultative process and the revitalization of the associations tackling the increasingly serious social, economic and cultural concerns.

A. Constitutional advances

25. The successive constitutional amendments of 1992 and 1996 gave fresh impetus to institutional development in Morocco. The 1992 amendments confirmed Morocco's support for the principles, rights and obligations deriving from the Charters of the international organizations it has joined and its commitment to universally accepted human rights principles, established the region as a local community, transformed the Constitutional Chamber into the Constitutional Council and raised the Economic and Social Council to the status of constitutional body.

26. The 1996 Constitution, which incorporated those amendments, was notable for its attempt to achieve institutional balance and for the adoption of a two-chamber system intended to broaden the socio-political, occupational and territorial basis on which Morocco's people are represented. The Chamber of Councillors will thus play a more active intermediary role between the local, regional and national levels, with the region being assigned the status of active participant in local democracy.

27. Moreover, new provisions in the 1996 Constitution establish freedom of contract (art. 15) as an irreversible means of achieving a de-monopolized economy. Likewise, the principle of control of public monies has been underscored by establishing the Audit Office as a constitutional body.

28. Finally, the 1996 Constitution finally restores the importance of the development sector (arts.32, 50 and 66), thus highlighting the need for a strategic vision of Morocco's future, and for the State and the main economic and social interest groups to be equipped with tools enabling them to perceive, locate and evaluate future undertakings and arrive at a better understanding of changing conditions.

B. High priority for social development

29. The Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, the first administration to operate under a system of alternating power in the country's political and institutional history, attaches the highest priority to social development, in keeping with the vision expressed by His Majesty the King: "A type of development that can bring social convergence, generate solidarity, redistribute the benefits of growth, and reduce inequalities". The finance law submitted to Parliament in June 1998 allocates 44 per cent of the budget to the social sector. It also seeks to achieve a rate of growth that will ensure the economic development needed in order to meet current needs and challenges.

30. Measures to tackle unemployment, poverty, inequality and social exclusion, the promotion of literacy and basic education, the improvement of basic health care, the reform of social protection and support for social housing are the social programmes to which the government attaches highest priority. Their implementation will lead to changes in the way that the social budget is allocated, both geographically and between sectors of the economy, the objective being to target as priorities the poorest areas and provinces and the most vulnerable parts of society. Implementation of these measures also forms an integral part of the new contract of solidarity between social categories, between regions and between the generations.

31. By the same token, the structures of government have been enriched and augmented by new departments created under the new system of alternating power to deal with human rights, social development, humanitarian activities, social solidarity, and the protection of children, the family and handicapped persons. Twelve out of 41 departments are now responsible for social issues and taking measures to tackle rehabilitation and exclusion.

32. The Ministry for Human Rights established in 1993 is the institutional expression of the government's policy of respect for human rights and their protection and promotion. Its basic mission is to maintain dialogue with

citizens and organizations, to investigate cases and to encourage respect for human rights. It must also ensure that domestic law conforms to the international instruments and promote a human rights culture among the population.

33. Under an agreement between UNESCO and the Rector of the Mohammed V University, the UNESCO-European Union (MEDA) Chair for Human Rights was inaugurated in 1996. A university facility for teaching, training and research, it is particularly active in the areas of high-level supervision and training, university teaching and scientific research.

C. Promotion of social dialogue

34. On 1 August 1996 the government, the employers and the trade unions signed an agreement that laid the foundations for a new culture and new ways of operating with regard to social dialogue and consultation. The partners have on several occasions reiterated the historic importance of the agreement, which has helped considerably to establish a climate of reflection and mutual confidence. Thanks to that climate and the determination of the partners to give effect to the provisions of the agreement, a number of achievements have been realized (see below).

D. Enhancement of the consultative process

35. The consultative process has clearly become stronger over the past three years. The consultative councils, places for dialogue on economic, social and cultural matters and human rights, have helped greatly to enhance the role of consultation in public decisions. They now fulfil a different role as providers of economic and social advice that informs decision-making. The consultative process is the basic component of the democratic state that allows social democracy to take shape. The establishment and organization, within consultative institutions, of permanent links between the political, economic, social and cultural spheres meets the fundamental need for consultation through dialogue, ensuring that decisions can be taken on a basis that will guarantee support.

36. The revitalization of the section for economic and social rights of the Consultative Council on Human Rights and the unveiling of a development strategy for Morocco by the National Council for Youth and the Future at its session held in February 1997 demonstrate the importance given in recent years to consultation as part of the process of building democracy.

37. In that context, and since the submission of its initial report in 1993 (E/1990/5/Add.13), Morocco has benefited from a new national body for dialogue and consultation. Alongside the Consultative Council on Human Rights and the National Council for Youth and the Future, a Consultative Council responsible for monitoring social dialogue has been set up in order to encourage dialogue and promote a culture of cooperation. Made up of representatives of all the social partners (government, occupational chambers, employers and trade unions), the Council discusses and analyzes work-related issues and makes proposals and recommendations.

E. Revitalization of associations

38. Benefiting from an extremely favourable environment of economic and political liberalization, over 20,000 associations now operate in Morocco. In the past three years, their activities have focused mainly on urgent social action: women's rights, the fight against poverty, and the promotion of small enterprises (over 8,000 associations created since 1993). Partnership projects between the authorities and NGOs have been set up in various regions: they operate in several spheres, dealing with economic development, access to drinking water and electricity, the opening up of rural areas, AIDS campaigns, illiteracy, etc.

39. This rapid expansion denotes the development of a modern movement of associations which is determined to tackle the ever more pressing economic, social and cultural concerns and is helping to improve communications between the State and civil society. The government supports this trend, and grants subsidies to the associations working to promote economic, social and cultural rights.

40. In addition to this substantial progress towards increased protection of economic, social and cultural rights, it should be noted that public spending on the social sectors rose from 23.25 billion dirhams in 1994 to 30.19 billion dirhams in 1997-98, an increase of some 30 per cent over the period in question (6.94 billion dirhams). The share of the State budget allocated to the social sectors increased by 5 per cent, from 35 per cent in 1994 to 40.69 per cent in 1997-98.

41. The Government of Morocco notes that, in law as in practice, economic, social and cultural rights are guaranteed to non-nationals who abide by the existing legislation.

ARTICLE 3

Equal rights of men and women to enjoy economic, social and cultural rights

42. Morocco's Constitution guarantees such equality, which is also established by specific legislation. Among the measures taken recently to establish the principle of equality of opportunity or treatment at work is the repeal of article 726 of the Dahir on Obligations and Contracts which made the employment of women conditional upon their husband's consent (Law No. 95/25 of 1995)

43. The government is strongly determined, from the legal point of view, to promote the status of women on the basis of equality, to improve legal practice in order to expedite implementation of the progress achieved in the context of the Code on Personal Status, and to carry out gradual reform of the Code in accordance with Islamic values. The Code on Personal Status was amended in 1993. The changes made addressed concern regarding the need to further improve the legal status of women and minors.

44. At an audience granted on 29 September 1991 to representatives of women's organizations, His Majesty the King emphasized that women had the opportunity to play a greater part in the development of society. Acting on royal directives,

those organizations prepared a memorandum setting out their ideas as to the changes they wished to see made to the Code on Personal Status. A commission was set up to review the Code, and the proposals submitted by the organizations led to significant innovations. These relate to conditions of marriage, the legal representation of minors, their right to protection and care, the dissolution of marriage and the Boards of Guardians.

45. However, although women are ever more present in working life, their participation in public life still falls short of expectations and of the role which should be theirs. The government is therefore determined to enhance the image of woman in society through education and training and to change ways of thinking through an active policy of communication. Finally, in 1994 the Moroccan government submitted its initial report on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

ARTICLE 4

46. The Moroccan government has not adopted any provision aimed at limiting the exercise of the rights recognized in the Covenant.

ARTICLE 5

47. The Moroccan government has not adopted any provision aimed at denying the rights or freedoms recognized in the Covenant. It has not permitted any restriction upon or derogation from any of the fundamental human rights, breach of which is punishable by the existing law.

ARTICLE 6

The right to work

A. The employment situation in Morocco

48. The Moroccan government submitted reports to the International Labour Organization in 1992 concerning the implementation of ILO Convention No.122 (employment policy) and ILO Convention No. 111 (discrimination in respect of employment and occupation) (see initial report of Morocco, E/1990/5/Add.13, par. 16-18).

49. In the current economic and social context, employment remains a major social concern. Institutions have been established with a view to familiarising all the partners with the employment situation in Morocco and establishing effective strategies that will help ensure early adoption of a national covenant on employment.

50. The National Council for Youth and the Future (CNJA), set up in 1991 as a national consultative body, is responsible for helping to ensure that education and training are adapted to national economic needs, that young people are suitably prepared for the future, and that their integration is successful. Aware of the urgent need to ensure the productive integration of young qualified people into working life in order to achieve a return on the collective investment made in education and training, the CNJA started to consider the

problems of youth employment in rural areas (First session, Rabat, March 1991). This revealed urgent problems arising from the imbalances between urban and rural areas, and from lack of opportunity for integrated and self-maintained local development (Second session, October 1991).

51. However, although stimulation of economic growth in urban and rural areas is a necessary condition to the promotion of employment, it is not sufficient. The introduction of a further parameter, involving linkage between the system of education and training and the ever growing economic needs of Moroccan society, helped provide a clearer picture of the options for improving the links between training and employment (Third session, February 1993).

52. The focus then shifted to the enterprise as a place of wealth creation, employment and training, and thus as a force for economic, social and cultural change (Fourth session, January 1995). A regional plan taking account of all the relevant factors at the institutional level was drawn up (Fifth session, January 1996). That placed greater emphasis on the innovatory role of the region and regionalization in stimulating employment and contributing to the rapid changes occurring in Morocco.

53. The year 1997 was dedicated to the theme of change as a sustainable and controlled element in the process of building the society of the future. In that context, the CNJA attempted to define the contours of the future society. It produced an evaluation of the major economic and social issues and of the elements needed to conduct a national debate on the problems of change. The CNJA's recommendations formed the basis for the adoption of legislative measures aimed at integrating qualified young people (The law on training and integration and the fund for the promotion of youth employment are examples).

54. The following conclusions may be drawn from the survey of urban employment and unemployment for the period 1984-1996. Urban unemployment rose from 518,569 in 1984 to 871,215 in 1996. Annual average growth in urban unemployment between 1984 and 1996 was 4.4 per cent. The gross participation rate (working population as a percentage of total urban population) stood at 34.7 per cent in 1996. The average unemployment rate for the same period was of the order of 16.6 per cent (unemployed urban population as a percentage of the urban labour force). It was 22.9, 18.1 and 16.9 per cent respectively in 1995, 1996 and 1997. The downward trend is mainly attributable to economic growth in the labour market. The following tables illustrate the trend in unemployment relative to population growth.

Year	Urban unemployment rate
1987	14.7 %
1988	13.9 %
1989	16.1 %
1990	15.8 %
1991	17.3 %
1992	16.0 %

Year	Urban unemployment rate
1993	15.9 %
1995	22.9 %
1997	16.9 %

Year	Population in millions
1960	11.6
1970	15.3
1980	19.4
1990	24.2
2000	28.7
2025	39.2

Although the Moroccan economy, thanks to the recovery, created 164,000 jobs in 1996, the unemployment rate remains high, particularly among young qualified people.

55. Solutions to the unemployment problem depend on overall change in the method of social organization. Such a change does not simply concern the economy. It entails a gradual but thorough reorganization of the distribution of incomes in modern society, guaranteeing rural areas and the marginalized parts of the population a status within society. It calls for the participation of the main interest groups and for decentralization that provides civil society with the organizational scope to take responsibility for itself and ensure its own development. That approach forms the basis of the government's efforts to implement an active employment policy supported by bi- and multilateral cooperation, as stipulated in the national covenant.

Creation of the Division of Cooperation

56. In the framework of the restructuring and reorganization of the Department of Employment (1996) a new structure, the Division of Cooperation, was established. Its responsibilities are to promote, monitor and evaluate, in liaison with the departments concerned, bi- and multilateral projects on work, employment, social protection for workers and illiteracy. Among its main activities are monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programmes carried out with bi-and multilateral partners in liaison with the departments concerned and monitoring of the implementation of international conventions and bilateral protocols in areas within the competence of the Department of Employment.

57. Several multi-or bilateral cooperation programmes have been launched with a view to improving the economic, social and cultural life of citizens.

a) Multilateral cooperation

58. Various cooperation projects and programmes have been initiated or launched with international organizations including UNDP (campaign against poverty), UNICEF and ILO/IPEC (campaign against child labour), UNFPA (introduction of basic concepts of hygiene and reproductive health to literacy programmes), the World Bank (promotion of employment) and the European Union (self-employment and small-scale credit).

59. As part of its cooperation with ILO, in 1996 the Department of Employment started a programming exercise with the Multidisciplinary Team for North and West Africa (EMANO) which involved the appropriate ministerial departments, the social partners and NGOs. On the basis of comments made by all the parties, EMANO prepared a document entitled "Morocco: promoting social development in an open economy" (Dec. 1996-March 1997). EMANO will use this document in deciding on a plan of action for cooperative links between Morocco and ILO.

b) Bilateral cooperation

60. Bilateral projects and programmes have been identified or started with respect to training and employment, industrial injuries and occupational diseases, social security, literacy, management training and the integration of young people. The main partners are Canada (and the province of Quebec), Egypt, France, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.

B. Measures to promote full employment

1. Establishment of training and integration mechanisms

61. Introduced under law no.1.93.16 of 29 March 1993 which determines incentives for enterprises which provide occupational training and courses on integration into working life, these new mechanisms constitute a particularly flexible and encouraging instrument. Some 4,303 training agreements have been approved. A national intermediation body to be set up in the near future will provide a better overview of requirements and facilitate the further development of these mechanisms, which are intended to assist the private sector's efforts to recruit young qualified people.

62. The Department of Employment has started a programme of further training, in partnership with employers and the professional chambers, which has benefited 175 job-seekers and provided training on setting up in business for 272 young entrepreneurs.

2. Development of in-service training

63. In order to improve the quality of the services provided by the Centres for Guidance and Information on Employment (CIOPE), a staff in-service training programme was implemented in accordance with an agreed training plan. To that effect, in cooperation with the National Agency for Employment (France) 12 advisors were given training on self-employment and the heads of the centres received training in management and in formulating action plans. One hundred trainees benefited from this programme in 1995, 1996 and 1997, over a total of 186 training days.

3. Establishment of guidance and information centres

64. A network of ten centres has been established in the main areas of employment. The results are as follows: 55,429 job-seekers; 13,272 job vacancies; 8,528 job vacancies filled; and 9,687 inquiries made of companies.

65. Other employment services were provided for job-seekers and employers, such as guidance and information on the job market, practical sessions on job seeking, assistance with the selection of candidates in setting up enterprises, etc. In addition to the CIOPE centres, the intermediation system for the job market also comprises 45 employment agencies whose services are intended for unqualified workers. They have helped 14,157 job-seekers to find employment in recent years.

66. The CIOPE network was recently transferred to the Office for Occupational Training and the Promotion of Work (OFPPT) with a view to implementation of the Programme for the Employment and Training of Young People, which is intended to create 20,000 jobs per year. Its objective is to strengthen enterprise development through the use of young qualified professionals trained to carry out a specific role within the enterprise.

4. Strategy to promote employment

67. A draft strategy for the promotion of employment has been drawn up which hinges on the following main priorities:

a) Directing growth towards the creation of productive jobs

In order to identify the adjustments to macroeconomic and sectoral policies that will ensure better integration of the employment objective and growth strategy, the decision-makers and the economic and social partners need thorough research, particularly in the spheres of cost evaluation, jobs and unemployment, fiscal, monetary and budgetary measures, and foreign trade.

b) Development of self-employment and of training for integration into working life

The strategy also seeks to mobilize the potential for job creation through support for self-employment and the scaling down of the additional training courses provided for high-priority job-seekers. Regarding self-employment, a study to evaluate employment programmes is intended to lead to the overhaul of the support mechanisms for young entrepreneurs and, inter alia, to the development of small-scale credit packages for use by the non-organized rural and urban sector.

68. The government recently approved a draft law on small-scale credit. Its objective is to establish a legal framework for the exercise of this activity that also provides a range of incentives for its encouragement. This reform meets the objective of targeting those disadvantaged sections of society which have projects but cannot gain access to conventional banking services owing to their precarious means and the absence of real guarantees to back up their requests for funding. The limit for this type of funding has been set at 50,000 dirhams.

69. In the past two years, 4,700 young people have been helped to set up their own businesses in rural areas, 2,700 small projects have been set up and sandwich courses have been organized for the children of farming families. In addition, 35 seminar leaders have received training in evaluating and monitoring the system to help young rural entrepreneurs.

70. As an indication of the rapid progress made in the social economy, the cooperative movement has developed considerably. Since 1994, the action taken to promote cooperatives has included the entry into force of law 24/83 determining the general status of cooperatives and the functions of the Office for Cooperative Development, the strengthening of training for managers of cooperatives, and the expediting of the approval procedure for new cooperatives. The number of cooperatives increased from 4,635 in 1991 to 5,651 by 30 August 1997. The number of members rose from 621,982 to 630,673 in 1996, increasing to 632,717 by 30 August 1997. As small and medium enterprises, cooperatives provide a considerable number of jobs. In addition to established posts and secondary employment, Morocco's cooperatives have created 4,964 jobs since 1994.

71. The support given to young promoters of micro-projects has been extended through training and the provision of assistance to develop ideas for projects and fund-raising activities. With regard to additional training, efforts are being made to remodel the parts of the programme which concern the integration of young job-seekers into working life and the re-employment and occupational adjustment of workers whose companies are restructured.

c) Establishment of a new structure for intermediation and the implementation of active labour-market policies

72. The restructuring of the public employment service will shortly result in the establishment of a body whose responsibilities will comprise intermediation, labour market regulation and the implementation of employment programmes. The basic tasks under this reform, which constitutes a governmental priority, are to develop a draft plan, programmes that mobilize human resources, develop occupational information and guidance and company liaison services, deal with job demand, and provide support for self-employment and integration into working life.

d) Strengthening analytical and experimental capacities with regard to employment promotion measures

73. The basic objectives of this programme are to equip the Department of Employment with the capacity to design and implement effective labour market policies. They include the establishment of an observatory on employment, a coordinating body, machinery for evaluating the action plan and forecasting job supply and demand, the implementation of studies and major surveys, and the development of training in the analysis and administration of the labour market.

5. Administration of migration and of requests to remain in post made by employees who have reached the age limit

74. The offices of the Department of Employment have supervised 20,007 employment contracts affecting Moroccans abroad, 24,328 employment contracts for

foreigners in Morocco, and 680 requests to remain in post made by employees who have reached the age limit.

6. Strengthening of the apparatus

75. Requiring more accurate techniques and tools in response to the need for greater professionalism in its work, the public employment service has taken appropriate steps with respect to data processing, job classification and self-employment.

a) New computerized system

76. A computerized system developed in the framework of the Department of Employment's strategy on information technology will improve the administration of job supply and demand (PIGODE system). The new system, which has been tested, will be used at CIOPE centres in matching job offers with requests, processing statistical data and dealing with files on immigration and emigration.

b) Completion of the classification of occupations and trades

77. This programme involves the creation of a register of occupations and trades, including a classification, an alphabetical index and a glossary. The purpose of the register is to establish a common language for the professionals working in the labour market, with a view to improving the process of matching up the demand for and supply of labour. The classification, which contains 33 occupational fields divided up into 125 sub-fields and 856 trades and occupations covering 9,216 terms, has been completed and is currently undergoing final preparation which will take account of the comments of various government departments, the employers, the unions and the professional associations.

c) Development of activities to support self-employment

78. A methodological guide has been produced to help CIOPE advisors identify job-seekers who have ideas for projects and a strong entrepreneurial capacity, with a view to supporting them throughout the project beginning at the upstream stage.

d) Preparation of a guide for counsellors

79. In order to improve and standardize counselling skills and practice, the first phase of a practical guide to counselling has been produced on the basis of interviews with practitioners and specialists. The files will be updated in the light of analysis of professional experience and improvements to the services offered by CIOPE.

e) Research

80. In the framework of the preparation of the Second Project on Social Priorities (BAJ II), two studies of the labour market have been launched. One focuses on the unofficial sector and the other on the evaluation and restructuring of the machinery for promoting employment and the employment services.

81. The aim of the first study is to remove the major obstacles to the growth of unofficial enterprises and to identify means of helping them contribute more effectively to job promotion and the overall functioning of the labour market. The results are intended to be used in establishing policies and measures suitable for adoption by the unofficial sector, with a view to improving its efficiency and easing its integration into the official economy.

82. The aim of the second study is to identify functional and operational deficiencies in the mechanisms of the fund for the promotion of youth employment and the law on occupational training and integration and to formulate proposals on restructuring those mechanisms and the public employment services, with a view to improving their effectiveness as instruments for employment promotion and labour market administration.

f) Development of human resources

83. The Department of Employment, through the National Institute of Labour and National Insurance (INTPS) has introduced a training strategy intended to:

a) Devise training measures which will fully professionalize the managerial staff of the Department of Employment;

b) Establish working and teaching methods which can cope effectively with the different situations that arise during training;

c) Develop new levels of competence within the Department; and

d) Adapt the Department's human resources to the sweeping socio-economic changes taking place in Morocco.

84. To implement the strategy, an in-service training programme for the entire staff of the Department of Employment was devised and introduced in 1997. The programme has six [sic] main components: basic training, development of general skills, training in information technology, management training, and practical training.

C. Legal measures

85. The studies carried out in this sphere concern the drafting or amendment of a number of laws in order to reflect the developments in the labour market. The work comprises:

a) Creation of a draft text that provides assistance with redeployment for employees who are threatened with dismissal on economic grounds;

b) Preparation of a feasibility study on the introduction of part-time work as a form of job sharing that can contribute to labour market flexibility;

c) Finalization of the founding instruments of the National Agency for Employment and its regional branches, including the Agency's Statute and the contract which the Agency is required to conclude with the State;

d) Preparation of a draft text amending the 1967 decree on labour committees;

e) Creation of a draft text concerning a labour survey;

f) Preparation of a draft text on the operation of private employment agencies.

D. Vocational training programme

86. In accordance with the provisions of para.2 of article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the government has continued to take steps in the sphere of technical and vocational guidance and training, which constitute an essential component of the right to work. Since the reform of 1984, the vocational training system has attempted to respond to the need to improve the performance and competitiveness of enterprises and to facilitate integration into working life and ensure better socio-economic conditions.

87. The government's activities in this sector have yielded the following results:

a) The structuring of vocational training into four levels: specialization, which is available to pupils who have completed the sixth year of basic education and offers 38 training options; qualification, which is available to pupils who have completed the ninth year of basic education and offers 97 training options; technician, available to pupils who have completed 3 years of secondary education and offering 121 training options; and specialized technician, which may be taken by holders of the baccalaureate and offers 76 training options.

b) The diversification of training options, which have increased to the point where they offer 332 special subjects covering the main socio-economic sectors and all regions of the country;

c) The creation in 1996 of engineering options for the textile manufacturing sector, with possibilities of transferring to the specialized technician level;

d) An increase in the number of trainees: from 50,000 in 1984 to 103,000 in 1991, 40 per cent being girls, and from 103,000 in 1991-92 to 131,600 in 1997-98, 45 per cent being girls;

e) A sustained quantitative increase in private-sector vocational training, with the number of trainees reaching 54,000, or 41 per cent of the overall total;

f) The introduction in 1993-94 of training at specialized technician level, which now has 7,000 baccalaureate holders taking 76 options;

g) The introduction in 1996-97 of a system in which applicants are selected and advised according to their abilities, training prerequisitests and the needs of the labour market;

h) Greater involvement in training by enterprises, particularly since 1987, when training was first organized on a contractual basis with the various vocational sectors, and since the introduction of sandwich courses. The latter were introduced in the framework of law 36/96 which was adopted unanimously by Parliament in 1996; the implementing order will be published in the Official Gazette of 19 February 1998;

i) The introduction in 1996-97 of machinery for discerning the skills requirements of enterprises, and the restructuring of the financial and operational aspects of in-service training into a three-part decentralized framework;

j) Decentralization of the administration of training, and the first steps towards autonomy for training establishments;

k) Qualifications for 20 per cent of the young people entering the labour market each year (60,000 per year with diplomas);

l) The introduction in 1995 of a system to certify the training provided by private operators;

m) A 78 per cent rate of return on the system and an external return (integration rate) of 62 per cent after nine months and 80 per cent after 3 years;

n) A clear increase in awareness of vocational training among young people. Those with the baccalaureate increasingly prefer this route to university (7,000 baccalaureate holders from specialized technician courses have been placed since 1993-94, in a system which does not offer them grants, and 42 per cent of the places at technician level have been taken up by baccalaureate holders although entry at this level does not require the baccalaureate);

o) The launch of an ambitious training and integration programme designed to integrate 20,000 young people per year into working life, rising to 40,000 per year in the medium term. The objective of this programme is to provide young people with the opportunity to gain initial work experience through placements lasting up to 18 months, and to enable enterprises to meet their need for skilled labour by providing young qualified people with additional training which shapes their experience in accordance with the requirements of the enterprise.

E. Reform of vocational training

88. The project to reform vocational training is intended to strengthen the competitiveness of enterprises by providing them with the skilled labour they need. The project has four operational objectives:

1. Re-staffing and development of enterprises

89. The outcome of the re-staffing and development rests on the five activities described below.

90. In-service training will be developed through the mechanisms established in 1996-97 and administered with the social partners. The objectives are to identify and meet the skilled labour requirements of enterprises, to establish a competitive market for training and to open a national facility for research in the sphere of human resources. A draft law being drawn up in consultation with the social partners for introduction in 1998-99 will specify the scope of application of in-service training, clarify the role of the different partners in its administration, identify the resources to be allocated and define the funding mechanisms. The reform is intended to bring the benefits of in-service training to 20 per cent of the employees registered annually with the National Social Security Fund (CNSS) until the year 2000, and to bring the human resources of enterprises up to strength every five years. Legal machinery will also be put in place to ensure that establishments provide appropriate in-service training.

91. The development of sandwich training in the framework of law 36/96, the implementing order for which is still in the process of adoption, will link sandwich training to the needs of enterprises and improve the integration of qualified young people. It will also entail thorough reform of the training system.
The expansion of sandwich training to the national scale, through a partnership including enterprises and professional organizations from the main economic sectors, will make it possible to restructure programmes in line with sandwich training and to introduce its methods to the teaching staff of enterprises and training establishments. It is intended to provide this type of training for 15 per cent of public sector trainees by the year 2000.

92. The human and material resources of training establishments will be upgraded through the introduction of a system to appraise trainers' skills, the implementation of individualized training plans with long-term instruction in the workplace, streamlining of course administration and improvements to the status of trainers that enhance their professional life.

93. Programmes and periods of training will be restructured through an approach based on qualifications, and the system of final assessment by professional panel will be extended.

94. There will be further development of training-integration programmes and of accelerated training within the various professions, the trainee acceptance rate will be improved at an average 5 per cent annually, particularly at the specialized technician and qualified worker levels, and a grant will be made available for setting up and promoting an apprenticeship system intended for pupils who leave school prematurely.

2. Development of rural training

95. Vocational training in rural areas has been stepped up by a) adjusting programmes, course length and training methods to specific circumstances, in particular through deregulation of the specialisation level; b) strengthening the courses and special training programmes for farmers' children; c) formulating new training courses in order to cover the various agricultural production systems and main rural occupations and facilitate the introduction of

new technology to the sector; and d) involving the professional chambers and organizations in the training process.

3. Encouragement for the private sector

96. Vocational training in the private sector has been stimulated through the following: a) State support to raise the standards of instructors; b) the award of qualifications for training and the introduction of a system for accrediting private training organizations; c) establishment of a new system of licensing and administration whose schedule of conditions requires market research and a training plan; d) creation of the mechanisms to ensure effective demand; and e) adjustments to the relevant legislation.

4. Improvements to the leadership and funding of training

97. The fourth objective of the reform of vocational training is to improve its leadership and funding. The following six activities have been undertaken to that effect:

a) Strengthening of the existing planning and evaluation arrangements for vocational training through the establishment of regional observatories, which will help improve understanding of the links between employment and training through surveys into the placement and progress of qualified entrants and research to forecast the demand for qualifications. A Regional Employment and Training Observatory (OREF) is being set up at Casablanca, and the intention is to extend the network in the medium term to Rabat, Meknes, Fez, Oujda, Agadir, Marrakech and Tangier;

b) Development of tools for structuring the employment and training markets, including reference data on employment, skills and training with regard to all the options offered by the various operators and the gradual general introduction of a policy of appointing sectoral committees to validate the programmes begun in 1996;

c) Consolidation and wider introduction of vocational guidance, and the integration of new information and communication technology into the system;

d) Strengthening and extension of the contractual training policy followed by the sector since 1987 with the professional bodies, introduction of autonomy for training establishments, involvement of professional bodies and occupational chambers in the administration of training establishments, and gradual introduction of contract-programmes with training operators on the basis of clear and measurable objectives and in the framework of a resources allocation system geared to performance;

e) Development of the resources to fund the vocational training sector in a cooperation context, through recovery of part of the training costs in order to maintain a sense of responsibility among trainees, improvements in training quality, and by encouraging civil society to contribute with a view to helping vulnerable groups or those in difficulty; and

f) Restructuring of the bodies responsible for dialogue and coordination. The region will be the preferred context for setting up the development mechanisms for vocational training.

F. Equality between men and women as regards employment

98. The Government of Morocco regards as essential the establishment of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the position of women, tackle all forms of discrimination against them and free their creative potential. Under the terms of the revised Constitution of 1996, public functions and employment are open to all citizens under the same conditions; women are guaranteed the same rights as men. Any breach, abuse or inequality is punishable under the existing laws.

99. The government has submitted reports to ILO on the measures taken to give effect to the provisions of Convention No. 26 concerning the creation of minimum wage-fixing machinery and Convention No. 99 concerning the creation of minimum wage-fixing machinery in agriculture.

100. The participation of women in economic activity is still increasing. Women represent 25 per cent of the actual working population. In the sector providing social services for the population (health and education), women represent 36 per cent of the workforce. Women are now obtaining posts involving responsibility and decision-making.

101. The right to work is exercised without discrimination based on colour, race, language or public opinion or any other form of discrimination. The existing Moroccan Constitution recognizes every citizen's right to choose work in order to secure his dignity.

ARTICLE 7

The right to just and favourable conditions of work

102. Morocco is a party to several ILO conventions, including the Equal Remuneration Convention (No.100), the Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention (No.14), the Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention (No.106), the Labour Inspection Convention (No.81) and the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention (No.129). In its initial report (E/1990/5/Add.13, 28 April 1993), the Government of Morocco recalled its most recent reports submitted to ILO in connection with the provisions of article 7 of the Covenant (paras. 42 to 45).

A. The right to remuneration

103. In conformity with the provisions of Convention No. 100 concerning equality between the sexes with respect to remuneration, ratified by Morocco, and those of the Constitution, Moroccan law is free from discrimination between the sexes with regard to wage-fixing. Recognizing that remuneration is fixed freely by the parties, Moroccan law has set a minimum wage which constitutes the legal minimum that can be paid to employees. The minimum wage is fixed according to a cost of living criterion and the financial means of the enterprise, taking into account the claims of workers' and employers' organizations. Raising the minimum wage level is a matter for prior discussion with the above-mentioned

organizations under the auspices of the National Commission for Social Dialogue set up for that purpose.

104. The measures taken over the period 1994-97 can be summarized as follows:

a) Establishment of a framework organization for wage-fixing. In this regard, the joint declaration agreed among the social partners in August 1996 establishes the relevant organizational mechanisms by setting up a number of committees, including a wages committee;

b) Promulgation of a decree raising the minimum wage by 10 per cent from 1 July 1996. In order to ensure that employees derive the appropriate benefit from the measures undertaken, the work inspectorate ensures compliance with the laws relating to wages through regular visits to the workplace. The number of inspections made to date is 16,894, during which 298 complaints were lodged against defaulting employers.

Progress of the minimum wage between 1991 and 1997

Industry, commerce and services				Agriculture		
	Variation, %	Hourly wage	Monthly wage	Variation, %	Daily wage	Monthly wage
1.4.1994	10	7.26	1 510.08	10	37.60	977.60
1.7.1997	10	7.98	1 659	10	41.36	1 075.36

B. Safe and healthy working conditions

105. Moroccan law contains provisions which devote particular attention to prevention and control in the context of safe and healthy working conditions. Notable among these are the legislation forbidding the performance of dangerous work by children and women, the texts on industrial medicine and the legislation on compensation for industrial accidents and occupational diseases. Article 2 of the Dahir of 2 July 1947 concerning working conditions provides that employers must list dangerous occupations in a declaration submitted to the work inspectorate. The employer is responsible for taking measures to protect workers' health and safety, and is also required to take all possible steps to ensure optimum working conditions. In 1995, the Department of Employment began a field study on occupational hazards with a view to identifying the sectors presenting a high risk to workers' health, as part of the implementation of a national policy of prevention.

ARTICLE 8

Trade union rights

106. Morocco is a party to ILO Convention No. 98, the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention. It has submitted several reports to ILO detailing the progress made on the protection of union rights in connection with article 8 of the Convention (see E/1990/5/Add.13, par 51). The Dahir of 16 July 1957 concerning the trade unions lays down the principle of freedom to establish unions. The same dahir permits married women exercising a vocation or trade to

belong to trade unions and to participate in their administration and management. Trade unions may only be dissolved by voluntary decision of their members in the absence of statutes or by judgement of a court. Civil servants, like workers in the private sector, are allowed to form professional organizations, with the exception of those responsible for State security and public order (armed forces, police).

Trade union rights under the draft labour code

107. The provisions of the Dahir of 1957 are included in the draft labour code with the following modifications:

a) Workers and employers may form organizations of their choice and become affiliated to them;

b) Trade unions may become affiliated to international workers' or employees' organizations;

c) Repeal of the condition in the Dahir of 1957 requiring that only Moroccan nationals may administer trade unions;

d) Prohibition of any kind of discrimination based on union membership in the following spheres: recruitment, management and distribution of labour, vocational training, the granting of welfare benefits, dismissal and disciplinary measures.

108. Since the date of submission of the initial report, cooperation and social dialogue have been revitalized, which has helped greatly in creating a new spirit between the State and the social partners. In the framework of social dialogue, the social partners signed a joint declaration on 1 August 1996. The following principles relating to union rights derive from that declaration:

a) Assurance of the conditions necessary to the free exercise of the freedoms of association laid down in the Constitution;

b) Development of a genuine partnership between the various social partners;

c) Respect for social law and for the conventions that Morocco has adopted or is adopting, particularly Convention No. 87 concerning freedom of association and protection of the right to organize and Convention No. 135 concerning workers' representatives;

d) Promotion of collective agreements in collaboration with the social partners;

e) Respect for the right to strike, which is guaranteed by the Constitution (art. 14);

f) Reemployment of workers dismissed on grounds relating to union activities;

g) Support for professional organizations on the basis of the nationally and internationally recognized criteria for representation;

h) Respect for the principle of union representativeness during negotiations and for the representation of workers at national and international level.

109. The agreement of 1 August realized a number of important gains: increased wages in the public and private sectors; raising of family allowances; improvement of pension and retirement arrangements; adoption of the Ministry of National Education's special system of internal promotion for teachers; thorough and regular review of labour disputes at local, provincial and national level; extension of the agreement of 1 August to include the Union for the National Press and the decision to set up an ad hoc committee similar to those provided for other sectors; reinstatement of dismissed persons from the public and semi-public sectors following a series of royal pardons; consolidation and strict implementation of the instruments of social dialogue. Other planned measures are under discussion.

110. The process of adopting the draft labour code has been revived since the appointment of an ad hoc committee resulting from the process of social dialogue. At the request of the social partners, consultations are taking place with a view to achieving a compromise on the outstanding issues.

111. The 1996 Constitution reaffirms the guarantee of the right to strike. The only restrictions (armed forces, police) remain in conformity with the content of para.2, article 8 of the Covenant.

112. The Government of Morocco is determined to strengthen its collaboration with the relevant departments and institutions, and with non-governmental organizations, with a view to finally settling the unresolved situations which have been referred to the Consultative Council on Human Rights of the Kingdom of Morocco.

ARTICLE 9

The right to social security

113. Morocco has a range of national insurance mechanisms covering compulsory and optional, public and private funds.

A. Compulsory funds

114. These comprise the National Social Security Fund (CNSS), the Moroccan Retirement Fund (CMR) and the Public System for Retirement Benefits (RCAR).

115. The CNSS, the main instrument of social protection for private sector employees, provides three kinds of benefits: family allowances, short-term benefits and long-term payments. It is funded through employees' and employers' contributions.

116. Membership of the social security system is obligatory and automatic for enterprises and their employees in industry, commerce and the private sector

occupations. Membership is also obligatory for sea fishermen, on an individual basis. In July 1982 the system was extended to the agriculture and forestry sector, and in June 1994 to the craft trades (decree of 29 April 1993, Official Gazette No. 4203 of 19 May 1993, p.193).

117. Voluntary membership of the social security system is open to employees who cease to be subject to the obligatory arrangements. They may continue to pay social security contributions in order to maintain full entitlement to long-term (invalidity, age, survivors) and short-term (daily sickness allowances, daily maternity allowances, death payments) benefits.

118. The number of operational enterprises affiliated to the CNSS rose from 19,821 in 1961 to 67,544 by 31 December 1996, at an average annual rate of 4,55 per cent. The number of registered employees rose from 284,782 in 1961 to 930,000 in 1996, at an average annual rate of 3.50 per cent.

119. The Moroccan Retirement Fund administers the retirement contribution systems of officials in civil and military service, local government officers and officials in public institutions. It is funded through the contributions of employees and their employers.

B. Optional funds

120. The optional funds, together with mutual societies, mainly administer health care. The Moroccan Inter-professional Retirement Fund provides additional retirement cover for private sector employees. Insurance companies are becoming more involved in the provision of additional protection.

121. Certain national insurance benefits are administered by the employer, whether private (industrial accidents and occupational diseases) or public (family allowances, industrial accidents). Some public institutions have their own social insurance funds.

C. Health cover

122. As there are no compulsory arrangements, this benefit is covered jointly by the insurance companies and mutual societies. The insurance companies are particularly prevalent in the private sector. In the public sector, nine mutual societies have come together to form a single federated fund, the National Provident Organizations Fund (CNOPS), which insures 80 per cent of public employees. The aim of this institution is to conduct, on behalf of its members and their entitled dependants, operations based on a spirit of providence, interdependence and mutual aid intended to cover the possible risks to humans. The CNOPS has around 1 million members and over 2 million other entitled dependants, who are entitled to reimbursement of health costs, third-party insurance, a social fund and cover when abroad.

Increase in numbers of people covered by mutual societies

	1994	%	1995	%	1996	%
Members	898,461	32.04	942,224	32.01	961,352	32.30
Entitled dependants:	1,905,677	67.96	2,001,330	67.99	2,015,391	67.70
Spouses	568,610	20.28	616,537	20.95	624,050	20.96
Children	1,337,067	47.68	1,384,793	47.04	1,391,341	46.74
Total beneficiaries	2,804,138	100.00	2,943,554	100.00	2,976,743	100.00

ARTICLE 10

Protection of the family, mothers and children

A. Protection of the family

123. In 1993, a new reform of the Code on Personal Status was carried out which consolidated the legal protection of women, minors and the family (see below). Penal law accords the family special protection by punishing any form of neglect (moral and material). Since the submission of the initial report, the associations acting on behalf of the family have adopted a far more dynamic approach, as shown by the increase in new associations. Their actions to raise awareness have made a considerable contribution to the reform of the Code on Personal Status.

B. Protection of children

124. Mention should be made of the legal machinery for the protection of the child which was described in the initial report (penal laws, Code on Personal Status, labour law) and of the intensive commitment shown, since 1993 in particular, by child protection associations, with strong governmental support, which has helped enhance the image of the child and ensure its protection with respect to health, nutrition and legal status.

125. In 1992, Morocco signed the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. In 1993, Morocco ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In that context, in 1992 it prepared a National Plan of Action to implement the world-wide agreements relating to children. A number of medium- and long-term objectives and strategies were defined. At the institutional level, they included the establishment of the National Congress on the Rights of the Child, which meets annually. Its main tasks are to evaluate the progress made in implementing the Declaration, to examine the impact of the strategies adopted and to identify activities requiring greater effort. It should also be pointed out that an observatory to monitor implementation of the Convention has been set up as an executive arm of the Congress. It may be useful to refer to the initial report of Morocco submitted in 1995 to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/28/Add.1).

C. Protection of maternity

126. In accordance with article 10 of the Convention, Morocco's social legislation accords maternity special protection, particularly with respect to leave and nursing time. Since 1987, the Ministry of Health has taken steps to achieve a satisfactory level of pre-natal and delivery coverage, which is regarded as a decisive factor in the campaign against maternal and perinatal mortality.
With assistance from UNFPA, Morocco has continued its efforts to improve mother and child care and family planning. Those efforts have achieved tangible results.

127. Examination of the change in people's experience of the various contraceptive methods shows a marked improvement in women's knowledge of long-term methods. This was the situation among 99 per cent of married women in 1994, across all socio-economic groups. This development has produced a positive impact on the prevalence of contraception, which increased from 19 per cent in 1980 to 50 per cent in 1995. By place of residence, the increase has been greater in rural areas than in towns, with respective proportional increases from 9 per cent to 39 per cent (+30 %) and from 36 per cent to 64 per cent (+ 28 %). The change has also had a positive impact on the fertility level in both towns and villages.

128. With regard to the programme for monitoring pregnancy and childbirth, despite the improvement seen in recent years the total number of pregnant women affected is still insufficient. By 1994, the prenatal consultation rate was 35 per cent, and 33 per cent of births were covered by public health institutions. Efforts are being made to address the situation in rural areas, which are still poorly served, the prenatal consultation rate being no higher than 27 per cent compared with the urban rate of 47 per cent. For prenatal care, the proportions are 45 per cent in rural areas and 87 per cent in urban areas, with a national average of 63 per cent..

Prenatal visits

Environment		1994		1995		1996		1997	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban		136,310	47,4	143,964	52,3	144,392	51,8	155,500	56,0
Rural	Fixed	84,373	59,8	96,768	56,3	91,566	58,0	105,894	73,8
	Mobile	32,450	11,4	22,526	8,8	24,793	9,7	30,813	11,2
	Total	116,823	27,4	116,294	27,5	116,359	28,2	136,707	32,7
Overall		253,133	35,4	260,258	37,2	260,751	37,7	292,207	42,0

Births

Environment	1994		1995		1996		1997	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	162,042	56.3	164,775	59.8	165,208	59.3	169,716	61.1
Rural	86,704	20.3	96,593	22.1	94,247	22.9	105,670	25.3
Total	248,746	34.8	258,368	36.9	259,455	37.5	275,386	39.6

Postnatal activities

Environment		1994		1995		1996		1997	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Urban		234,872	81.6	241,920	87.8	230,694	82.8	230,954	83.2
Rural	Fixed	175,667	124.5	181,921	109.2	171,701	108.9	180,524	125.8
	Mobile	30,725	10.8	24,493	9.5	24,102	9.5	29,428	10.7
	Total	206,392	48.4	206,414	48.8	195,803	47.5	209,952	50.3
Overall		441,264	61.8	448,334	64.2	426,497	61.7	440,906	63.4

Vaccination rate of children aged less than one year

Year	BCG (in %)	Diphtheria, Tetanus and Whooping cough	Smallpox (in %)
1994	93	87	87
1995	93	90	88
1996	96	95	93

Vaccinations in 1997
(Provisional data)

BCG	Diphtheria, Tetanus and Whooping cough	Smallpox
591,257	555,279	538,737

ARTICLE 11

The right to an adequate standard of living

129. The Government of Morocco has continued its efforts to improve still further the standard of living of its citizens (see also, in the section on article 7, the progress made with respect to salaries and wages). The raising of wages and family allowances for employees of the State, local authorities and

public establishments required the allocation of over 3,2 billion dirhams from the budget, spread over two years beginning in 1996. It should also be recalled that basic necessities are subsidized from a special State fund.

A. Right to adequate food

130. The right to adequate food is a fundamental right given high priority by the authorities, which are taking a number of steps to implement it fully. Through its efforts over several years, Morocco has achieved a reasonable level of self-sufficiency. Given the potential of its maritime and agricultural resources, Morocco has continued to develop rural areas and the fishing industry as key sectors.

131. Administration of the precarious agricultural sector is one of the main economic challenges facing the country. A strategy to deal with the uncertainties has been devised and its implementation has begun. The strategy is based on a) a determined policy to improve the exploitation of water resources; b) strengthening of the national facilities for research on agriculture in arid areas; c) a consistent and sound policy for achieving reliable food supplies; and d) an overall approach that displays lasting consistency towards the economic operators (farmers, stockbreeders, processing concerns, etc.), which can be affected by many types of hazard. Steps have been taken to assist smallholders, mainly in the form of tax exemptions and debt restructuring.

132. Considerable effort has been made to ensure supplies of potable water in rural areas, despite the often adverse climate. However, disparities between town and country continue. Water is often supplied to the rural population under difficult conditions, and the success rate is low: 14 per cent in 1990, 18 per cent in 1994, and 32 per cent in 1997. In order to remedy the situation, the government has launched a wide-ranging programme for the bulk supply of drinking water to rural populations (PAGER) whose main objective is to improve the supply of drinking water to rural areas. The aim is to achieve an 80 per cent supply rate by 2003.

133. Aware of the problems involved in providing reliable supplies of food and drinking water to its urban and rural populations, Morocco has embarked on a programme to build water storage structures which consists in: a) construction of one dam per year until 2000, and of two large dams per year thereafter; b) production of medium-sized dams intended mainly to improve water supplies in rural areas or to irrigate areas of around 1,000 ha; and c) production of small dams for locations where the above-mentioned structures prove unsuited to requirements.

134. In recent years the government has undertaken several initiatives to open up rural areas. These activities led, in 1995, to a national programme for rural road-building (PNCRR) intended to construct 11,236 km of roads in 7-9 years. By September 1997 the length of road constructed totalled 2,696 km, of which 2,150 is in use. In addition to its economic impact, the programme is intended to improve rural living conditions. The roads will provide quicker access to medical centres, social services and markets, and also to schools, resulting in higher-quality health care and improved school attendance, particularly among girls.

B. Right to adequate housing

135. Morocco has made significant progress in improving urban living conditions and preventive health care. However, certain social indicators remain weak by comparison with countries whose level of development is similar. The right to adequate housing and the promotion of better living conditions are a central priority for the government. According to a study carried out by the National Council for Youth and the Future, Morocco needs to build some 180,000 dwellings each year until 2010. As the rural population will have fallen by 2010, it can be said that the urban population will account for the greater part of that requirement (around 170,000 dwellings). The study shows that fewer than 70,000 houses per year have been built throughout the recent period, creating an annual shortfall of over 100,000 dwellings. It also reveals that, out of the 4 million dwellings in Morocco, 2.2 million (74 per cent of them in rural areas) have no piped water and almost 2 million (78 per cent of them in rural areas) have no electricity.

136. The authorities have devoted particular attention to policy on housing and better living conditions-an essential component of social progress. Five main aspects have shown encouraging results:

a) Intensification of measures to deal with unhealthy living conditions. The main achievements have been the rebuilding of many more dwellings not in compliance with the regulations and the start of programmes to renew older structures;

b) Promotion of social housing. The programme to build 200,000 dwellings for the most disadvantaged parts of the population marks a new departure in Morocco's social housing policy;

c) Improvement of rural living conditions. The government is attempting to complete the rural programmes still outstanding by combining the efforts of the parties involved, and attaches particular priority to the integrated development of rural areas. It allows financial organizations greater involvement in the granting of credit for rural housing, supporting its action through procedures (advantageous rates of interest or direct assistance) designed to help those who build low-cost housing in rural areas;

d) Promotion of private housing; and

e) Strengthening of the role of local communities.

Between 1993 and 1996, the number of building permits increased from 29,307 to 39,160-an increase of 33.6 per cent. As a result, 104,787 dwellings were built in 1996 compared with 53,460 in 1993.

137. Moreover, the government's efforts have led to an improvement in household living conditions. The data on convenience items in dwellings show that living conditions have improved, although the pace and extent of the change depend on the residential environment.

138. In urban areas 86 per cent of households in 1994 occupied brick dwellings compared with 79 per cent in 1985 and 74 per cent in 1971.The households living

in Moroccan houses and in villas increased more than those in other types of dwelling: 75.8 per cent of households lived in them compared with 67.7 per cent in 1985. By contrast, the proportion of households in apartments fell in 1994 (10.5 per cent of all households in 1994 against 13 per cent in 1985).

139. With regard to other types of dwelling defined as precarious or basic, the figures indicate that the number of households living in them fell from 26.4 per cent in 1971 to 13.7 per cent in 1994. Shacks and adobe dwellings, which accounted for 21.4 per cent of urban households in 1971, had decreased by over 9 per cent by 1994 (12.1 per cent). This relative improvement in building quality is the result of action taken by the State to improve housing, in particular the house-building policy implemented since the mid-1970s.

140. Concerning equipment and conveniences in dwellings, the 1994 general census of population and housing reveals some improvements. The number of urban households with running water rose from 62.9 per cent in 1982 to 74.2 per cent in 1994. Over the same period, the proportion of urban households with electricity rose from 74.4 per cent to 80.7 per cent.

141. Lastly, another indicator of urban housing improvement is the increased number of owner-occupiers and of households having the possibility of ownership; their proportion rose from 40.9 per cent in 1982 to 48.5 per cent in 1994. As a corollary, the proportion of rent-paying households decreased from 46 per cent in 1982 to 35 per cent in 1994.

142. In rural areas, the 1994 census revealed a preponderance of adobe dwellings and shacks, which accounted for 78 per cent of households. Nevertheless, in recent years the number of brick dwellings has risen such that the proportion of rural households in permanent structures increased from 14 per cent in 1985 to 22 per cent in 1994.

143. The last census also shows a slight improvement with regard to basic facilities such as running water in the home and electricity. The proportion of households receiving piped water from the National Drinking Water Agency (ONEP) rose from 2.2 per cent in 1982 to 4 per cent in 1994. As for electricity, the number of rural households connected to the grid doubled in the period between censuses (9.7 per cent in 1994 against 4.5 per cent in 1982).

ARTICLE 12

The right to physical and mental health

A. Moroccan health policy

144. The objective of health policy is to correct the imbalances in the national health system and make health care provision more effective and equitable, taking account of the constraints on choice imposed by the repercussions of demographic pressure and changes, the roles of the participants, and the funding and administration mechanisms for the sector. Accordingly, Morocco's health policy addresses five main concerns: a) more effective mobilization and use of resources; b) the building of a new relationship between the public and private sectors regarding health matters; c) streamlined management and regulation of the overall health care system; d)

improved services with control of spending; and e) participation by local communities.

145. The proportion of public funds allocated to health in 1997-98 was 12 per cent. Investment credits for public health in 1997-98 increased by 31.39 per cent over the previous financial year. The share of the social protection agencies represented 20 per cent of all credits granted to the social sector, mainly as the result of the State's increased contribution to the Moroccan Interprofessional Retirement Fund (CIMR) following the improvements made to the civil service pension system.

B. Maternal and child health

146. In order to protect the health of mothers and reduce the infant mortality rate, the government has continued to implement various vaccination programmes. The proportion of children aged less than one year vaccinated against the six target diseases (diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, whooping cough, measles and tuberculosis) rose from 50 per cent in 1987 (83 per cent in urban areas and 41 per cent in rural areas) to 80 per cent in 1994 (92 per cent in urban areas, 68 per cent in rural areas).

147. With regard to measures for dealing with diarrhoeal diseases, 471,130 cases of diarrhoea in children aged less than one year were treated in 1994, and in addition 353,737 cases among the 12-23 months age group and 289,669 cases among children aged between 20 and 59 months. These actions were strengthened through the reintroduction of the 1988 programme to promote oral rehydration for children aged less than two years with diarrhoea. In 1994, 42 per cent of children received the same quantity of water as before their diarrhoea and 55 per cent a greater quantity, with 71 per cent receiving treatment.

Number of children treated for diarrhoea

i) By age

Year	0-11 months	12-23 months	24-59 months	Total
1992	305,588	210,374	127,374	643,950
1993	405,417	305,149	236,990	947,556
1994	428,185	330,322	268,719	1,027,266
1995	383,649	296,184	244,514	924,547
1996	375,015	303,206	234,169	912,390
1997	211,588	178,470	134,186	524,244

ii) By type of diarrhoea

Year	New cases	Previous cases	Persistent cases	Total
1992	605,108	33,851	4,991	643,950
1993	903,963	39,293	4,300	947,556

Year	New cases	Previous cases	Persistent cases	Total
1994	988,668	34,592	3,966	1,027,266
1995	890,249	31,293	51,798	924,547
1996	884,672	25,540	2,178	912,390
1997	510,052	12,756	1,436	524,244

iii) By level of dehydration

Year	A	B	C	Total
1992	611,938	29,312	2,700	643,950
1993	919,915	25,681	1,960	947,556
1994	1,006,806	18,788	1,632	1,027,226
1995	901,294	21,740	1,474	924,547
1996	883,275	27,700	1,415	912,390
1997	506,642	16,166	1,436	524,244

C. Epidemic and communicable disease control programmes

148. Wide-ranging programmes have been initiated to combat these diseases effectively. They include those for tuberculosis, leprosy, Aids and sexually transmitted diseases. These programmes are monitored in close cooperation with United Nations specialized organizations (WHO, FAO, IAEA, UNFPA) and USAID. Finally, it should be mentioned that several NGOs play an important role in the context of health, in particular the campaigns against diseases such as Aids, tuberculosis and diabetes.

ARTICLE 13

The right to education

A. Moroccan education policy

149. Education policy is founded on a number of legally enshrined or officially declared principles, namely: a) the right of all to education and training (article 13 of the Constitution); b) compulsory education for all Moroccan children aged from 7 to 13 (Dahir 163,071 of 13 November 1963)- the 1985-86 reform extended this to a compulsory nine-year basic education; and c) free education at all levels and in all types of public education.

150. The Moroccan education system has three main purposes:

a) Cultural: education should provide the succeeding generations with a grounding in their own culture and help them become aware of other cultures and civilizations in the world. It should also teach them the religious and moral

values inherent in the Moroccan identity and respect for the other religions and all other forms of belief.

b) Social: education is seen as a major factor in social advancement. It plays the greatest part in helping citizens to understand their lives, to play a positive role in political life, and to contribute to the advancement of social progress and the achievement of demographic and environmental balance.

c) Economic: education is regarded as an essential factor in economic development. It raises vocational standards, trains managers and increases national productivity and wealth.

151. Three of the four objectives that Morocco has set for itself since independence have been achieved: unification of almost the whole teaching sector, arabization of the curricula and the establishment of a fully Moroccan teaching contingent.

152. The importance attached to the education sector is reflected in the share of the State budget allocated to the National Education Ministry and the facilities extended to private investors in education, although the State remains the main funder of education. In 1997-98, spending on education amounted to 20.91 per cent of the overall budget. That covers only basic and secondary education, as the State provides different funding for higher education, scientific research and culture. The share of the education budget for the first stage of basic education is 37 per cent, with the rest allocated to the second basic stage and secondary education.

B. Developments in primary and secondary education

1. Statutory education

a) First stage of basic public education

153. The number of pupils in the first stage of basic public education had reached 3,191,000 by 1997-98, an overall increase of 15.2 per cent compared with 1993-94, when there were only 2,769,000 pupils. The percentage of children in full-time education was 68 for the first basic stage and 69.6 for the various other stages of public education. The gross percentage for the first stage of basic state education in 1997-98 was 83.2 per cent compared with 70.5 per cent in 1993-94; an increase of 12.7 per cent. For public and private education together, the gross percentage was 86.7 per cent in 1997-98.

154. In September 1997, a total of 563,000 children entered the first year of basic education. There having been only 539,700 during the 1993-94 school year, that represented an increase of 4 per cent. In 1997-98, private education enrolled 33,000 new pupils into the first year of basic education.

155. Although the normal age of admission to the first year is 7 years, children may start earlier or later depending on the availability of places. The general admission rate recorded in 1997-98 was 95.3 per cent for public and private schools nation-wide (86.5 per cent in 1993-94). That rate increased to 88.6 per cent in public education in 1997-98 (82.5 per cent in 1993-94).

156. However, the efforts to spread basic education in rural areas are hampered by a number of constraints of a geographical, economic and cultural nature (absence of means of communication, scattered habitations, mountainous areas in certain regions, etc.). Despite these difficulties, the admission rate in rural areas was 84.6 per cent in 1997-98 and 75.2 per cent among girls.

157. With a view to improving the basic education offered to pupils, the 1985 reform extended the length of basic education from 6 to 9 years while also increasing the number of pupils passing through basic education and the number going on to the second basic stage. Accordingly, the proportion of pupils enrolled in the first year of the basic stage reaching the sixth and final year of the basic education is 65 per cent (80 per cent of them proceed to the seventh year of basic education).

b) Second stage of basic public education

158. In 1997-98, the number of pupils in the second stage of basic education stood at 1,008,000 compared with 863,000 in 1993-94, an increase of 16.8 per cent. The percentage of school attenders in the corresponding age group (13-15) in 1996-97 was 45.5 per cent. The equivalent figure for the second stage was 31 per cent. The gross percentage of children in full-time education in 1996-97 was 49.4 per cent, compared with 45.6 per cent in 1993-94, i.e. a gain of 3.8 per cent. The gross admission rate into the second stage rose from 41.9 per cent in 1993-94 to 44.8 per cent in 1996-97. In this stage, 74 per cent of the pupils in the seventh year progressed to the ninth year, but the rate of transfer to secondary education at national level was no greater than 43.8 per cent by June 1997.

c) Public secondary education

159. In 1997-98, there were 411,000 pupils enrolled in public secondary education as compared with 363,000 in 1993-94, an increase of 13.2 per cent. In 1997-98, technical education alone accounted for 21,600 pupils, which represented an increase of 42 per cent over the total of 15,200 pupils in 1993-94. The average age of the pupils who had not fallen behind their age group in this stage was 16-18 years. The percentage of children undertaking secondary education considered as a single entity was 13.2 per cent (against 11.3 per cent in 1993-94). The gross admission rate increased from 19.6 per cent in 1993-94 to 21.4 per cent in 1996-97.Among the pupils enrolled in the first year of the secondary stage, 66.8 per cent reached the third and final year, of whom 47.2 per cent obtained the baccalaureate.

2. Non-statutory education

160. Despite the efforts made, the illiteracy rate in Morocco is very high, affecting 55 per cent of the population aged over ten years (according to the 1994 census). This situation persuaded the National Education Ministry to set up a non-statutory education programme. Although it complements the statutory education system and helps spread and support education, it differs in objectives, principles and approach, its additional aims being:

a) To promote socio-professional integration and strengthen equality of opportunity in matters concerning the rights and obligations of the citizen;

b) To establish a new form of teaching aimed at gradually eradicating illiteracy in Morocco;

c) To provide education for all;

d) To reintegrate youngsters aged from 8 to 16 into statutory education, vocational training or working life;

e) To promote the employment of young qualified people by offering them the opportunity to contribute to national development;

f) To involve and mobilize governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society around the objective of education for all.

161. The intended recipients of this education comprise mainly children aged from 8 to 16 years, without excluding adults. The children in question have either never attended school or have left prematurely. Priority will be given to the population living in rural areas and in the vicinity of towns. Particular attention will be paid to children and young people in precarious and difficult circumstances ("street children", children in prison, etc.), children and young people who are working (craft trades, small businesses, etc.), the rural population (children, young people, adults), and women (female heads of household, girls working in houses, etc.). Among all the categories mentioned, considerable efforts will be made to benefit girls.

Education in integrated classes for disabled pupils

162. In accordance with the principle of education for all, the Ministry of Education, in close collaboration with the High Commission for the Disabled, has devised a plan of action to integrate mentally handicapped and visually- and hearing- impaired children into public schools. This project also aims to promote their socio-professional integration and to strengthen equality of opportunity as regards citizens' rights and obligations.

3. Improvement of teaching quality

163. With the intention of improving the quality of teaching, the Ministry has introduced new pedagogical material to school curricula which focuses particularly on the population, human rights and the environment.

a) Education on population

164. The education project on population is part of a wide-ranging programme of cooperation with UNFPA. Its objective is to institutionalize this discipline within the Ministry of Education through a multidisciplinary approach aimed at making pupils, teachers and parents aware of the ways in which population factors in Morocco interact with economic, social, cultural and environmental realities. The programme will be extended to secondary education this year, having been concerned with basic education in its early phases. It will focus on reproductive health, relations between the sexes and sustainable development.

b) Education on human rights

165. This project, initiated with the Department responsible for human rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the European Commission, is currently in its preparatory phase. The experimental phase, in which the project will be implemented in a sample group of schools, is planned for the beginning of the 1998-99 school year.

c) Education on the environment

166. The Ministry of Education is launching programmes aimed at making pupils aware of environmental problems. In that regard, mention should be made of the plan of action being carried out with the Ministry of the Environment and the National Drinking Water Agency, and of the GLOBE programme of awareness raising and environmental research begun with the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which aims to use the Internet to set up an international network of pupils, teachers and scientists in order to study the global environment. Fourteen schools have been selected to take part in the programme.

C. Promotion of schooling in rural areas

1. Development of schooling in a rural context

167. The Ministry of National Education has initiated a strategy for developing rural community schools that are autonomous, responsible, effective, and in tune with their surroundings. The strategy places human resources at the heart of all these concerns by making training the focal point of sustainable development in rural areas. In addition, it is concerned with the expansion and improvement of schooling, and pupil retention and school performance in high- priority areas. It will be implemented in four phases: preparation (1995), experiment (1996-97), extension (1998-99) and general introduction (from 2000). The project began in 1996 in 10 pilot offices. The large number of participating partners includes ministries, international and regional organizations, NGOs, parents of pupils, and communes. The cooperative undertakings place emphasis on training for participants in the teaching programme and on resources that help girls gain access to education.

2. The programme of social priorities

168. Social priorities programme I (PPS I or BAJ I) was launched with the intention of facilitating the government's social strategy. The aim of the strategy is to provide the most impoverished with greater access to social services and to improve the likelihood of their participating in economically productive activities. The multisectoral PPS/BAJ programme is intended for the fourteen most disadvantaged and least urbanized provinces, which are home to 27 per cent (7.1 million) of the population.

169. The basic educational component will develop human resources by providing access to education and literacy for populations who have been deprived of them. The objective of the project is to support the government's efforts to improve the education system- with respect to both quality and quantity- and place its performance on a par with that in other countries with similar economies. The

five-year project will comprise five sections focusing on the following objectives:

a) To improve the access and retention rates for basic education in remote rural areas by increasing the number of available classrooms;

b) To reduce the disparity between the school attendance rates of boys and girls;

c) To improve the quality of education;

d) To improve the effectiveness of the government's literacy programmes;

e) To provide the National Ministry for Education with the technical support to implement its sectoral action plan aimed at reallocating resources to high-priority activities and streamlining budgetary practices.

D. Higher education

170. Higher education policy in Morocco aims to make education at this level accessible to everyone according to his abilities. Thus, every student who fulfils the academic entry requirements has the right of free access to higher education (baccalaureate for open-entry establishments and baccalaureate plus selective admission procedure for numerus clausus establishments).

171. To ensure greater access to higher education, the State assists students by means of grants and subsidies for use in university accommodation and restaurants. In 1996-97 this support for students accounted for over 30 per cent (754 million dirhams) of the operating budget for higher education.

172. The State contributes almost all of the funding for higher education. Private sector participation is still very limited (3 per cent in terms of student numbers). The State allocated 4.5 per cent of the budget to higher education in 1997-98, compared with 4 per cent in 1994. That figure is much higher if the allocations for management training at educational establishments are taken into account.

173. The efforts of the authorities have led to significant quantitative growth in higher education over the past four years. That development has been instrumental in the training of high-level technical and administrative staff for all sectors of the economy. It has also increased the numbers of Moroccan managers in the public and private sectors, and in particular the proportion of Moroccan teachers in the education system (basic, secondary and higher levels). This quantitative expansion of the system has been complemented, especially in the past ten years, by the decentralization of educational establishments and greater diversity in training possibilities. At the same time, great progress has been made regarding the participation of women in higher education.

174. The expansion of higher education and the progress made in that sphere are apparent from the changes in three major parameters: overall student numbers, the increased number of graduates and improved staffing levels.

Increased student numbers

175. The overall number of students in higher education stood at 280,000 in 1996-97, having increased by an average 11 per cent annually since 1960. The annual average increase in female students over the same period was 15 per cent. This growth is the direct result of the increased number of baccalaureate holders, who form the potential market for higher education. Their numbers increased from 7,800 in 1973 to over 68,300 in 1997. Demand for higher education, measured by the number of enrolments each year, increased by 9.0 per cent per year, in step with the increase in the number of baccalaureate holders (9.4 per cent) over the same period.

176. Higher education is composed of three subsystems : university education, management training and private higher education. Over 90 per cent of students are enrolled in public higher education in universities. Private higher education accounts for only 3.3 per cent , and the remainder attend management training establishments, including those offering management training for teachers (which are also public institutions). Newly qualified baccalaureate holders each year enrol in higher education. In 1996-97, 91 per cent of those who had passed the 1996 baccalaureate enrolled only in the university higher education system.

Increased numbers of graduates

177. The expansion of the higher education system in Morocco can also be discerned from the number of graduates it produces. The number of university graduates in 1995-96 was 24,380 (including 860 third-stage graduates) compared with only 130 in 1960-61. Taking into account those who completed management training, including teacher training, the total comes to 34,300. The majority take arts and humanities courses. Second in popularity are law and political science, followed by the sciences. However, it should be noted that in 1995-96 the proportion of university graduates who studied science was 26.6 per cent, compared with 3 per cent in 1970-71. It was in the late 1980s that the number of science graduates began to increase sharply, reflecting the particular importance attached to scientific and technical training by the authorities. In 1995-96, female university graduates represented around 39.4 per cent of the total, as against 39 per cent in 1993-94.

Increased staff numbers

178. The teacher/student ratio in 1996-97 across the different parts of higher education (universities and management training) was 1:20. In the management training institutions there were 5.8 students per teacher, and in the university establishments of higher education 26.6. In 1993-94, the latter figure had been 31.

179. The relatively high staffing level was achieved through a sustained effort to recruit teachers with research qualifications. The number of teachers in university higher education, which had stood at 172 in 1961-62 (81 per cent from abroad), reached 9,600 (with 2,270 women and less than 1 per cent of foreigners) by 1996-97. Since 1994, the State has recruited 2,034 teachers into university higher education at the rate of 678 per year.

180. One of the most positive aspects of the development of higher education in Morocco is the effective contribution to decentralization at national level made by the university centres set up in all the economic regions of the country. The number of university towns increased from two in 1960-61 to 17 in 1996-97. The number of university establishments of higher education increased from 6 to 63 over the same period, and to 68 by 1997-98. Taking into account the management training institutions, particularly those providing management training for teachers, the number of establishments and cities where higher education has been introduced is much greater. Over the same period, the number of universities increased from 2 to 13, then to 14 in 1997-98.

181. With a view to adapting training to the needs of the economy and easing the integration of graduates into the system, a policy of diversification in higher education was adopted from the start of the 1980s and stepped up in the early 1990s. Seven colleges of higher technology, seven scientific and technical faculties, three national colleges of business and administration, a college of applied arts and crafts and two faculties of medicine and pharmacy were created. Their geographical location took account of the specific features of each host city and of factors relating to decentralization. The objectives of the new training initiatives were:

a) Strengthening of training in the sciences, technical subjects and information technology;

b) Diversification of the options offered in technical-professional training with a view to preparing the student for direct entry into working life;

c) Adjustment of training and research in line with the concerns of the economic sectors at regional level;

d) Adoption of new methods and programmes for training graduates having the skills and ability to set up small and medium enterprises.

182. More diversified training has also been introduced at older institutions through applied degrees. These courses are taken in the second cycle of science, arts and law degrees. Their main objective is to inject fresh momentum into these establishments and bring them to a new relationship with their economic and social environment.

183. One of the greatest achievements of Moroccan higher education has been to have fostered the social advancement of the managerial classes who have emerged from backgrounds of low and average income, and to have contributed to the advancement of women. In 1996-97, some 41.4 per cent of students were female. In medicine, pharmacy and the arts the level exceeded 50 per cent: 67.7 per cent in dentistry, 54.4 per cent in medicine and pharmacy and 51.4 per cent in arts subjects. In economics and law, 40.5 per cent of students were female. The percentage in commerce and administration was 43.2 per cent. For scientific and technical subjects, the levels were 36.4 per cent in technology, 30 per cent in sciences, 27 per cent in science and technology and 20 per cent in engineering science. Female students represented 31 per cent of those enrolled on third-cycle courses in 1996-97. Thirty nine per cent of graduates from higher

education in 1995-96 were female, and 24.4 per cent of university teaching staff in 1995-96 were women compared with 22 per cent in 1993-94.

184. With the objective of expanding higher education and at the same time providing newly-qualified baccalaureate holders, particularly from impoverished backgrounds, with the best possible opportunity to take advantage of higher education, the State offers assistance to students in the form of grants, food and lodging, health care and cultural and sporting facilities. All students enrolled in higher education are entitled to apply for a grant. At 600 million dirhams, the budget for university grants in 1994 was around 27 per cent of the operating budget for university education. Since 1994, a policy to streamline the grants system has been in operation, the aim being to achieve greater fairness by awarding grants to students from low-income backgrounds. Despite the policy of rationalization, 75 per cent of grant applications in 1996-97 were successful and the budget for university grants has remained at 600 million dirhams. The number of students awarded grants is 146,000, or more than 58 per cent of those in university higher education. There are 33,682 students living in halls of residence (13 per cent of the total number), and the number of meals served is estimated at 6,290,000.

185. The budget for university higher education in 1997-98 was around 3,306 million dirhams, i.e. 4.5 per cent of the national budget, compared with 4 per cent in 1993-94 and 3.2 per cent in 1979-80. These figures illustrate the considerable efforts made by the Moroccan authorities to provide universal access to higher education on the basis of equality.

E. Right of choice of educational establishment

186. Parents are free to send their children to the public or private schools of their choice. Moroccan law contains no provision impeding the free exercise of this right or the right to establish and direct schools.

F. Adult education and literacy

187. In the framework of the campaign against illiteracy, the Department of Employment has developed projects and programmes of a specific and general nature. The general literacy programmes cover all provinces of the Kingdom, all categories of population, and commence on 1 October every year for a period of nine months. The literacy campaign has two levels: the basic phase (first year) and the supplementary phase (second year) (see below the table entitled "Summary of literacy programmes, 1994-97").

188. The programme of social priorities (BAJ I) concerns rural areas. Consultations aimed at recruiting international specialists to assist the Department of Employment began in 1997. The programme will begin with a trial in the 14 most disadvantaged provinces of the country. It has a three-fold objective: to design and test new strategies concerned with functional literacy and post-literacy based on a scientific approach, to introduce concepts[insert word] and to help 40,000 people achieve literacy per year, on the basis of 3,000 per province.

G. Specific projects

1. Project MOR/93/P12

189. Initiated in the framework of cooperation with UNFPA, this project has achieved:

a) The training of 40 managerial staff, 8 female regional coordinators of welfare centres, 480 female supervisors for education and work centres, and 240 female heads of education and work centres;

b) The organization of 12 training seminars in 12 provinces (40 persons per seminar) for teachers of the post-literacy stage;

c) The production of 231,000 reading books; and

d) The retraining of 770 female teachers.

Project MOR/97/P07

190. Based on a national sub-programme on reproductive health, this project is being implemented in the framework of cooperation with UNFPA for the period 1997-2001 and concerns 10 of the most disadvantaged provinces. Its objectives are:

a) To raise awareness among women and girls of child-bearing age with respect to population factors and reproductive health;

b) To introduce universal education on population;

c) To train 300 female supervisors for 108 welfare centres;

d) To eliminate illiteracy in 75,000 women and girls and 100,000 young people, and also make them aware of the importance of reproductive health and its consequences;

e) To review the teaching material in use with a view to including material on reproductive health and hygiene.

3. The "Education V" project

191. Launched in cooperation with BAD and FAO, this project is concerned with the elimination of illiteracy in rural areas. Its aims are:

a) To provide a neighbourhood literacy programme for women and girls through the use of mobile units;

b) To eliminate illiteracy among 40,000 women and 1,550 girls working in 31 farming cooperatives;

c) To design and produce special teaching material.

Summary of literacy programmes, 1994-97

PROGRAMME	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	TOTAL 1994-1997
Basic phase	68,416	78,037	86,353	224,806
Supplementary phase	23,156	29,453	32,262	92,874
Men	51,013	59,474	68,500	135,375
Women	40,562	48,016	50,115	164,305
Rural areas	37,144	46,822	50,868	134,834
Urban areas	54,431	60,668	67,747	182,846
Total of beneficiaries	91,557	107,490	118,615	317,680

ARTICLE 15

The right to take part in cultural life

A. Moroccan cultural policy

192. The Department of Culture has continued to implement its strategy aimed at enabling all citizens, without discrimination, fully to enjoy their rights in strict accordance with the provisions of the Covenant.

1. Cultural life in the rural environment

193. In implementation of high royal instructions placing rural areas at the heart of governmental strategy, in the framework of the policy enabling all citizens to participate in cultural life and to contribute to the improvement of rural living conditions, and with a view to improving the geographical distribution of cultural services and facilities, the Ministry of Culture has initiated, in cooperation with local communities, an extensive programme to build and equip libraries in rural centres. The Ministry provides staff, books and equipment, and the local communities build the premises.

194. Likewise, in addition to the initiatives taken by various associations and NGOs and with a view to enabling the rural population to enjoy the fruits of national culture, in January 1998 the Department of Culture launched a continuous programme of artistic and cultural events (children's matinees, plays, concerts, etc.) intended to raise the profile of culture throughout the Kingdom, particularly in rural areas and small towns.

195. In the framework of the decentralization and democratisation of cultural life, having regard to the role of culture in all economic and social development, and in order to enable rural areas to enjoy appropriate cultural facilities in accordance with law 47-96 on regional organization, permanent committees responsible for educational and cultural matters have been established as part of the sixteen recently created regional councils.

2. Community participation in cultural life

196. In conformity with the high royal instructions on strengthening decentralization and with a view to enabling all citizens to participate in cultural life and promoting culture in the private sector, the following measures have been introduced.

a) Creation of the Higher Council and Regional Councils for Culture

197. In the framework of the decentralization and democratisation of cultural life, a Higher Council and Regional Councils for Culture were established by Decree No. 2-94-288 of 21 January 1995. In assuming the honorary presidency of these institutions, His Majesty the King has demonstrated the importance he attaches to culture as a basic element in development. These consultative bodies, comprising representatives of all the social partners concerned (local communities, cultural associations and unions, private and banking sector, personalities from the arts and literature, etc.), constitute a genuine forum for debating cultural policy and determining the direction and priorities of cultural actions. The work of the Higher Council for Culture is organized at local level by the Regional Councils for Culture, which are responsible, inter alia, for assessing the population's cultural requirements, promoting regional cultural activities and advising on proposals relating to cultural policy and strategy.

b) Promotion and development of cultural patronage

198. The financial resources available for culture-as in most countries-fall far short of meeting the ever increasing demand for cultural activities. Faced with that deficit, and aware of the contribution which could be made by civil society, the private sector, local communities and others to promote culture for the benefit of citizens in town and country, the Office of the Secretary of State for Culture has included patronage among its basic cultural policy objectives. To that end, it has just held a series of short conferences, in cooperation with UNESCO, entitled "Culture and Patronage in Morocco: practical considerations for their organization". This event, which brought together businesses, creative people and artists, heads of cultural agencies, researchers, university lecturers and experts from Morocco and abroad, was mainly intended as a vehicle for establishing new links between the various potential contributors to cultural patronage, building on the existing practical experience of patronage and identifying opportunities, practical methods and prospects for its development.

B. Conservation, development and diffusion of culture

1. Conservation of the cultural heritage

199. Conservation, understanding and development of the cultural heritage are prime objectives of the Department of Culture. To that effect, it carries out a number of actions.

a) Historic monuments

200. The Department of Culture has mounted several operations to conserve and restore historic monuments of different areas in various regions of the Kingdom: earth architecture (Taourirt, Rissani), medina ramparts and gates (Sale, Rabat, Taroudante), medersas (Ben Youssef in Marrakech, Meridinide in Sale); some of these actions were funded through patronage.

b) Museums

201. The many actions carried out in this context include the inventory of the collections acquired by the Department of Culture, raising of public awareness through the regular celebration of International Museums Day, and the drafting of legislation governing private museums, two of which have been opened in Sale (1995) and Marrakech (1997).

c) Inventory of the cultural heritage

202. The activities carried out in this sphere have focused on: building a database on the arts, customs, habits and oral traditions; creating an inventory of applied arts and crafts and traditional know-how; organizing missions to conduct inventories in various regions of the Kingdom; informing the public and diffusing knowledge about the cultural heritage.

d) World Heritage

203. In the context of the importance it attaches to conservation of the cultural heritage, Morocco ratified the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1975 and has had some of its cultural possessions included in UNESCO's world heritage list: the medina at Fez in 1981, the medina at Marrakech in 1985, the kasbah at Ait Ben Haddou in 1987, the medina at Meknes in 1996, Tetouan and Volubilis in 1997. In addition, UNESCO has declared the square of Jamaa El Fna in Marrakech part of the world's oral heritage.

2. Promotion of books and libraries

204. As a means of supporting literary and artistic endeavour, and in continuation of a national initiative launched some years ago, the Department of Culture awards on an annual basis the "Moroccan Book Prize", the "Grand Merit Prize" (under the active presidency of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed) and the "Hassan II Prize for manuscripts and documents", with the aim of protecting the written part of Morocco's national heritage.

205. In order to protect the moral and material interests relating to books, and since UNESCO's designation of 23 April as World Book and Copyright Day, several events are held throughout the Kingdom each year to commemorate that day (festival of the book from 23 to 30 April), with a view to raising public awareness of culture and promoting books in particular and culture in general.

3. Support for cultural associations

206. The Department of Culture provides moral and financial support for several cultural associations. It also participates in several of their events, and encourages them to contribute to the many cultural initiatives it undertakes each year. Thus, a sizeable infrastructure has been established which provides cultural associations with considerable scope for expression. The number of youth clubs, genuine centres for youth activities, increased from 242 in 1994 to 267 in 1997. The number of users increased from 2,526,626 in 1994 to 2,767,019 in 1997. Likewise, 96,670 young people used the services of reception centres, which offer a welcome to groups of youngsters travelling to explore different regions of Morocco or to take part in educational, cultural or sporting events.

C. Encouragement and development of international cooperation and contacts

207. With the aim of formalising the ties of friendship and cooperation that exist between the Kingdom of Morocco and fraternal countries, and in order to maintain and strengthen Morocco's cultural identity throughout the world, the Office of the Secretary of State, apart from organizing cultural weeks and participating in international cultural meetings and festivals, is increasing the level of its cultural and artistic cooperation with international bodies and international cultural foundations. In this regard, an outstanding recent occasion was the establishment of a Moroccan-Andalusian foundation for dialogue between three cultures and religions (Muslim, Jewish and Christian) with its headquarters at the Moroccan pavilion in Seville. This foundation is concerned with the promotion of principles that have always been important to Morocco in matters concerning inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue.

Conclusion

208. In conformity with the provisions of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Morocco has continued its efforts to ensure the full exercise of the economic, social and cultural rights recognized in the Covenant. Since the submission of its initial report in 1993 (E/1990/5/Add.13), the progress of Moroccan society has been marked by sweeping changes which have facilitated increased action in favour of economic, social and cultural rights. Significant progress has been made in the control of population growth and to improve living standards, and in the development of political institutions through the adoption of a new Constitution and the succession of a new government under a system based on alternation of power- a historic development in the process of modernising Morocco's political life. These achievements have been made more appreciable through the promotion of social dialogue following the signing of the agreement of 1 August 1996 by the Government and the social partners, the revitalization of the consultative process, and the gradual emancipation of civil society and its increased involvement in economic, social and cultural development. The real progress made in the social sphere is reflected in increased budgetary allocations.

209. Nevertheless, all these efforts can only achieve the desired results if the level of foreign debt is reduced considerably. The burden of foreign debt has worsened as a result of the consecutive years of drought Morocco has suffered. The outstanding amount of external debt was reduced from 67.9 per cent of GDP to 58.3 per cent in 1997. This result was achieved in part through

arrangements made with France and Spain to convert a portion of the debts into investments, and also by advance payment of part of the costly overall debt. Despite appreciable efforts, the level of debt remains high, and the charges on external debt (interest and redemption payments) continue to absorb 28 per cent of the revenue to the balance of payments. The lowering of external debt was achieved to the detriment of the national public debt, which was set at 39 per cent of GDP in 1997 in order to cover the budget deficit and the negative balance in external finances.

210. However, on the basis of a strategic and purposeful vision that encourages participation, and with a firm grip on the balance between fundamental necessities, the Moroccan government is firmly resolved to give priority to its social programme, whose sheer scale represents one of the greatest challenges confronting Morocco. This is made clear by the economic and financial report accompanying the 1998-99 finance law, in which the government describes its social strategy in the following terms:

> "In the social sphere, in addition to the elaboration of a covenant on employment which will involve all parts of the nation, the government's main areas of priority are measures to tackle unemployment, poverty, inequality and social exclusion, the promotion of literacy and basic education, the improvement of essential health care, social welfare reform and support for social housing.
>
> The implementation of these plans, in the framework of an integrated approach, is conditional upon changes in the geographical and sectoral distribution of social spending which target the poorest and most vulnerable parts of society, particularly in rural areas and on the periphery of towns.
>
> A thorough reform of the social spending mechanisms in order to benefit the most deprived will be carried out by the government, which will establish a system for identifying the sections of the population that should receive social services free from the State in respect of health, nutrition, housing and welfare assistance.
>
> The social strategy is also intended to strengthen the position of women, free their creative potential and tackle all the forms of discrimination they suffer. It aims to protect the family, children and the disabled.
>
> To that effect, the government will draw up a code on children, strengthen the programmes aimed at protecting them from the violence and abuse they suffer, and improve the existing structures providing care, training and assistance for disabled citizens.
>
> The social strategy will be reinforced by a social development fund and the establishment of a transparent mechanism for mobilizing the zakat".